


Building a Foundation for the Future...

*Working with families and the public and private
sector to provide **services** and **support** programs
for Connecticut citizens with mental retardation*




Report to Connecticut Citizens 2006/2007

DMR Connecticut's Department
of Mental Retardation

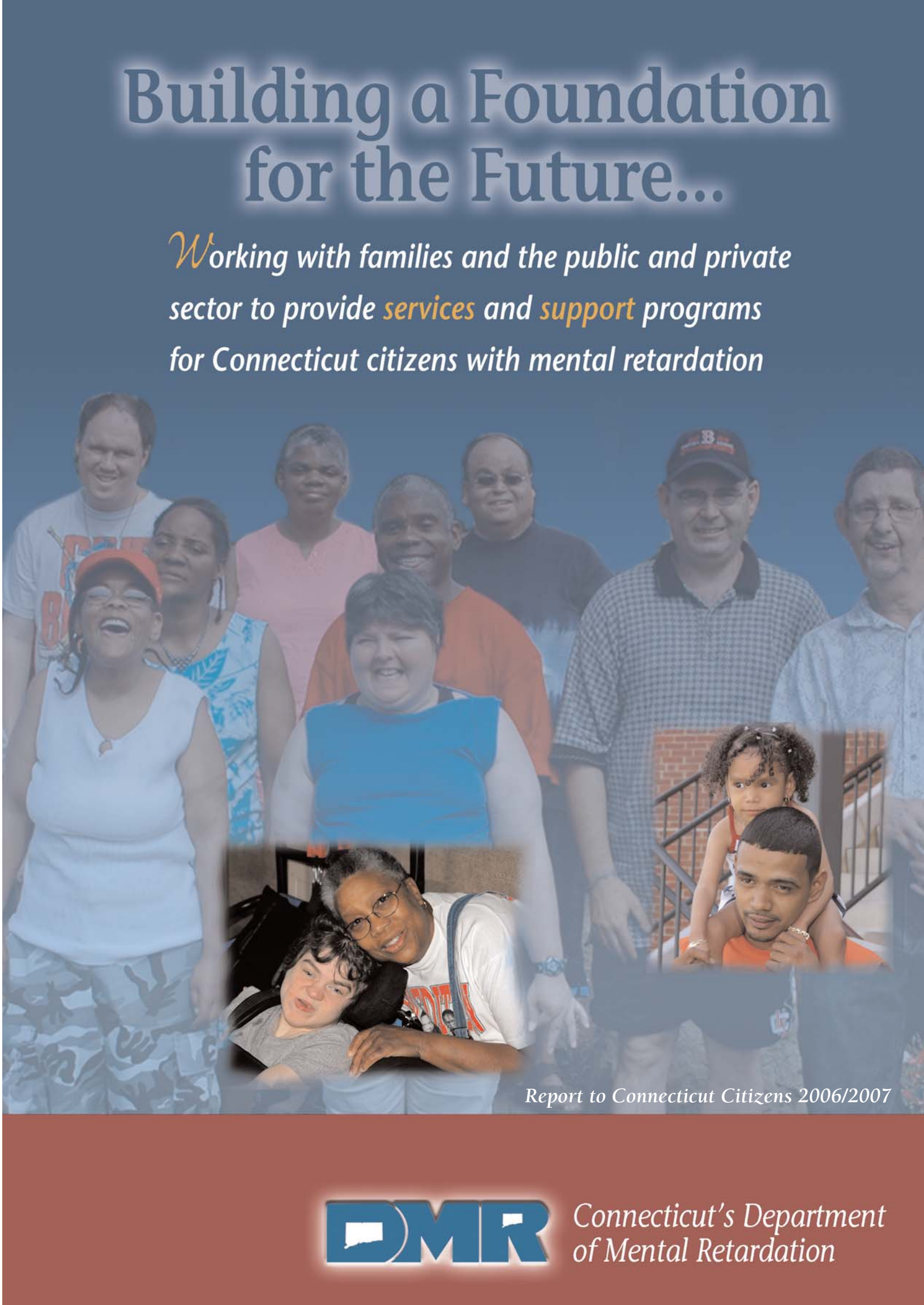
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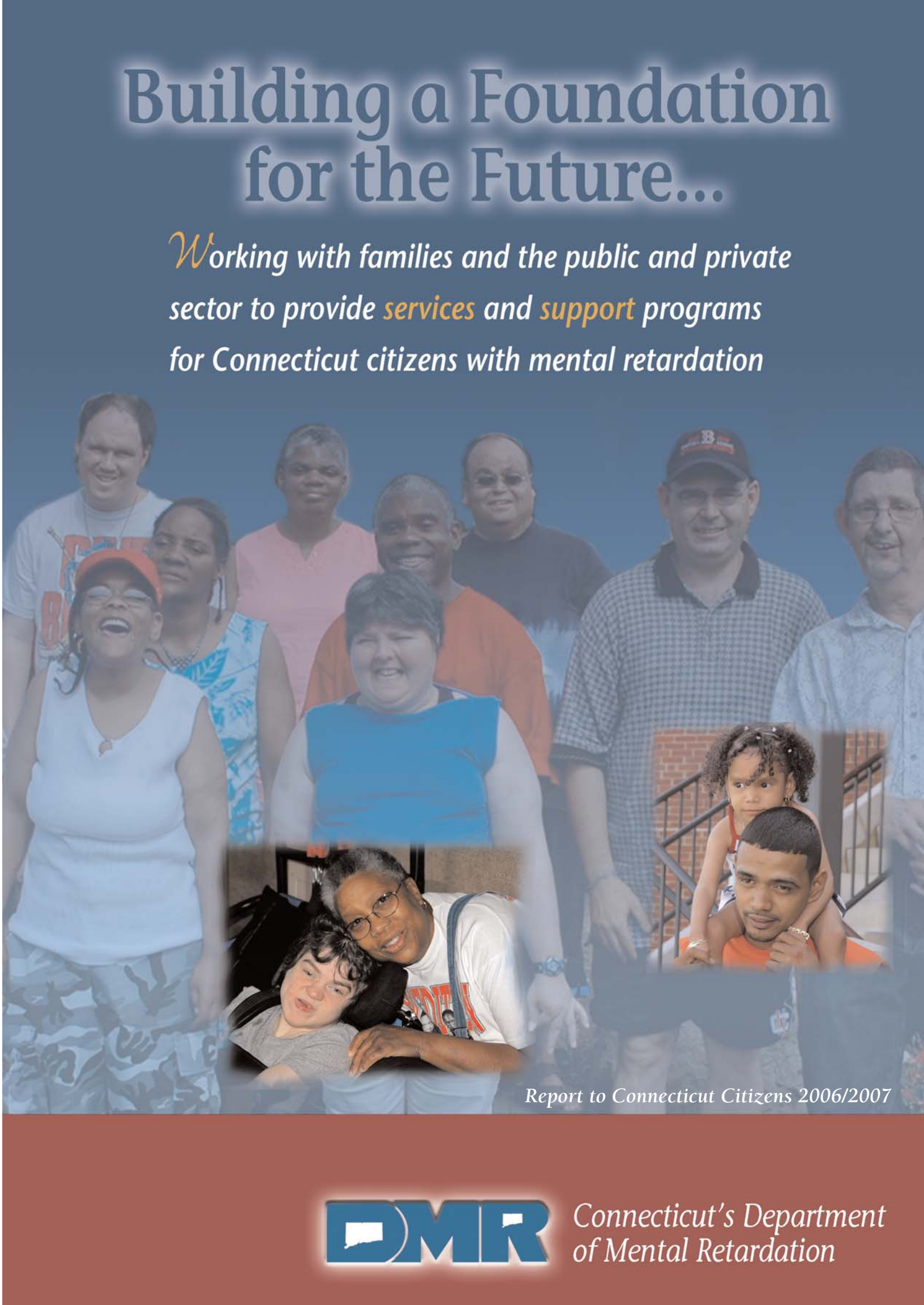
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Commissioner's Comments



Certainly, as we review the past year, the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) and our partners take great pride as we review our accomplishments.

Our Waiting List Initiative continues to help enhance the lives of many of our caregivers over the age of 65. In the past two years, over 360 families have been served from the list. In addition, we were able to offer additional supports to

over 100 families a year.

Respite Services continue to be an important part of our families' lives. We are opening our eleventh center this fall and are in the development process for the twelfth. The centers are conveniently located throughout the state and served over 1,400 families this year.

In June 2006, we embarked on a major Safety Awareness Campaign. The campaign, *Be Aware - Be Safe*, focused on transportation, eating, and environmental safety for consumers served by the department. In addition, in September, the department began an employee safety campaign, which emphasizes safety in the workplace for our colleagues.

Out of respect and dignity for the people we serve, the department and the state legislature passed legislation to solicit input regarding the potential name change of the agency. Sensitive to people's feelings on the negative connotation of the term, "mental retardation," we held a public forum to listen to recommendations from our advocates and consumers. The department will compile all of the findings and submit a report to Governor Rell and the state legislature in January 2007.

The department continues to be a national leader in our self-directed supports program. This past year, over 500 individuals made choices for their supports and in November, the department will be one of only six states presenting its initiative at the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services conference in Virginia.

In late August, Governor Rell signed into law the Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot Program bill, which will provide a coordinated system of supports and services, including case management for up to fifty adults with autism who do not have mental retardation and are not eligible for DMR services.

The DMR Fiscal Year 2007 budget is over \$866 million dollars. This generous commitment from Governor Rell and the state legislature has enabled us to provide services to over 19,000 individuals. Additionally, during the last fiscal year, DMR operated programs generated \$337 million dollars in federal reimbursement to the State of Connecticut, a 138% increase from the \$141 million generated in Fiscal Year 1995.

Critical to our success are state and private sector employees who perform thousands of acts of kindness every day. The level of resources our governor and legislature have made available to us ranks among the highest in the nation. It is our collective responsibility to assure those resources translate into a dignified and rewarding life for those we serve.

Finally, as we approach the year 2007, we look forward to continuing to serve our consumers and their families and consider it a privilege to be a part of your lives.

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

Waiting List Initiative

- After many years of advocating for families on the DMR Waiting List, with the support of Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Connecticut Legislature, a 5-Year Waiting List Initiative was implemented in FY05.
- The initiative provides residential support in each of the next five years for 150 individuals on the Waiting List and offers enhanced family support for an additional 100 families.
- In FY05 and FY06, the department surpassed its goal by 20% in placing individuals from the waiting list. Over the past two Fiscal Years, 361 people were served from the waiting list and another 125 individuals were placed in residential vacancies.

Individual People Served

- In FY05, DMR served 19,150 people including 4,515 infants and toddlers in our Birth to Three Program.
- Over the past 10 years, Birth to Three Programs provided services to over 39,000 families.
- DMR provided support to 266 High School Graduates and 120 individuals who will age out of other programs in FY05.

Respite Centers

- DMR opened its 11th Family Respite Center in FY06.
- Respite Centers serve over 1,400 families a year.



Grant in Aid For Day Programs

- Department officials strongly advocated for and received \$2 million dollars in FY06 and an additional \$2 million in FY07 through the Bond Act to establish a Grant In Aid program for non-profit day program agencies to fund capital repairs at their day program sites.

Personnel

- Mandatory Overtime Hours decreased by 4.4% in FY06.
- Sick Leave usage declined 2.3% in FY06.
- Worker's Compensation claims decreased 13.5% in FY06.
- In FY06, 124 employees returned to work in selective duty assignments, reducing time spent on workers compensation leave.

DMR Employees

- The Department employs over 5,000 part-time and full-time staff. The professionalism, commitment and dedication they bring to the workplace enhances the lives of the thousands of people we serve.
- Over the years, DMR employees have been recognized for their outstanding achievements, receiving numerous national and state awards. DMR employees have been honored with the Governor's Service Award, Distinguished State Managerial and State Nurse of the Year Awards. They also serve on councils such as; the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Special Olympics Connecticut Board of Directors and Early Childhood Cabinet. Additionally, many other employees spend countless hours of service each year volunteering their time and expertise on various boards and committees across Connecticut.



Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara cuts the ribbon to Spruce Brook Family Resource Center in Southbury with Cynthia Virtuoso (left), and Karen Prada and her son, Ryan (right).



Department of Mental Retardation employees Peter Jackson, Mental Retardation Worker 1 (MRW) Southbury Training School (STS), and AnnTetreault, North Region Education Liaison receive the Governor's Service Award at the State Capitol. Pictured (left to right) North Region Director Dr. John Houchin, Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara, Ann Tetreault, North Region Education Liaison, Governor M. Jodi Rell, Southbury Training School Director Fritz Gorst and Peter Jackson, Mental Retardation Worker.

Council on Mental Retardation



The Council on Mental Retardation was established to advise and consult with regard to issues affecting the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) and its programs that serve Connecticut citizens. In consultation with DMR Commissioner O'Meara, the Council recommends to the Governor and State General Assembly any legislation that would enhance and improve the care and quality of service provided by the agency.

Over the years, the Council has advocated for major initiatives. They were instrumental in the development of the Abuse/Neglect Registry, the Waiting List Initiative and continue lobbying for enhanced medical and dental health services. Currently, members are supporting additional funding for Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for DMR private providers.

DMR Ranks Nationally in Self-Directed Supports

- DMR has been invited to present in November 2006 the Connecticut process of effective self and family directed supports at the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services in Alexandria, Virginia. Connecticut is a national leader in providing services based on individual and family values.

Self Advocacy Leading Change in CT

- Over the past couple of years, nine Self Advocate Coordinators have been hired by the department.
- The Self Advocates have worked diligently to enhance the leadership skills of DMR consumers. They have aggressively supported more participation in self



The Silver City Friendship Self Advocacy Group held a fundraiser to help purchase groceries for those less fortunate. Pictured L to R, Self Advocates Tim Ridley, Michelle Bell, Robert Rebstock, and Andrea Favereaux.

advocacy and have helped to increase the number of consumers participating in the department's decision making activities.

- Consumers now participate in a variety of committees including the Council on Mental Retardation, Self Advocacy Advisory Group, Regional Committees and various planning and cultural competency councils.
- The Self Advocates participate in new employee training, employment interviews, speak at leadership forums as well as at national self advocacy conferences.

Autism Pilot Program

- An Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot Program was passed by the Connecticut Legislature to provide a coordinated system of supports and services, including case management for up to fifty adults with autism spectrum disorders who are not eligible for DMR services.

Department of Children and Families (DCF) Voluntary Services Initiative

- The Department of Children and Families Volunteer Services Program has aided children who also have mental retardation and their families. The combined efforts of the two agencies is a major step, embracing these children by transitioning almost 200 youths into the Department of Mental Retardation's care in FY06-07. An additional 54 families were enrolled in the volunteer program.

Level of Need Tool (LON)

- Over the past two and one-half years, the department through a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) System Change Grant developed the new Level of Need Tool (LON). The innovative process assesses an individual's need for supports in an equitable and consistent manner for the purpose of allocating DMR resources. The LON was implemented in April 2006 statewide and has been recognized nationally as a resourceful and innovative tool.

DMR Offers New Language Line Services

- In FY06, the department contracted with Language Line Services, which provides interpreters for phone conversations between non-english-speaking members of the public and DMR staff members.
- This service enhances the department's ability to more adequately serve our consumers and their families despite differences in language.



Department of Mental Retardation Self Advocate Coordinator Carol Grabbe accepts Governor M. Jodi Rell's proclamation and is joined by (left to right) Representative Peggy Sayers, Self Advocate Chavis Chapell, Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara, Executive Director of Culture & Tourism, Jennifer Aniskovich and Senator Lou DeLuca at the 2005 Living Out Loud Art Exhibit.

“Connecticut has a long and proud history of providing excellent services and supports to its citizens with mental retardation. These supports rely on the competence, commitment and continuous caring of our private and public sector employees who are the foundation of our service delivery system.”

Safety Awareness Campaign

- Under Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara's direction, the department embarked on a major safety campaign that targets all DMR employees and Private Provider Agencies.
- "Be Aware-Be Safe," focuses on consumers transportation, eating and environmental safety. In addition, a statewide Safety Summit was convened for agency administrators, private providers, families, advocates and employees to make recommendations for the enhancement of safety in the department



Earthtones are a group of four men, Robert Auriemme, Earl Cowes, Louis Gainotte and Allen Howell, who reside at the Southbury Training School. They all work full-time in various jobs. They enjoy learning new songs during their weekly therapy groups. Over the years, they have performed for families and friends.

DMR Name Change

- During the 2006 legislative session, DMR administrators submitted legislation regarding a potential name change for the department. Public Act 06-92 (HB 5478), "An Act Concerning the Department of Mental Retardation," passed the Connecticut State Legislature. The Act requires DMR to solicit input regarding a name change for the department from individuals and families receiving services provided by the department, advocates for persons with mental retardation and other interested parties.
- Commissioner O'Meara will submit a report of findings and recommendations, including the cost of any recommended name changes, to the Governor, the Office of Policy and Management and the Public Health Committee on or before January 1, 2007.

Southbury Training School Released from Federal Oversight

- In March 2006, Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara announced that the Southbury Training School (STS) has been released from

active federal court oversight. After almost 10 years, United States District Judge Ellen Bree Burns issued the order, which purged the state from a 1996 contempt ruling.

- Judge Burns commended the state, writing in her release, "Today, residents of STS are safer and benefit from a state-of-the-art model of institutional care...and in many instances (the state has) gone beyond the court-mandated requirements to provide 'best practices.' "

New Interagency Agreement Governs Abuse/Neglect Investigations

- DMR and the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (OPA) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that governs the investigation of allegations of abuse and neglect of individuals with mental retardation.
- The agreement reflects the responsibilities of each agency, and outlines processes to ensure that each office carries out investigative responsibilities and the provision of protective services efficiently and in a manner designed to protect the best interests of individuals served by the department.

Budget

- The DMR Budget has grown since 1995 from \$450 million dollars to over \$866 million dollars.

Federal Revenue Reimbursements

- DMR in FY05 generated \$337.17 million dollars in federal reimbursements, a 138% increase from the \$141.41 million generated in FY95.
- Total federal dollars generated by DMR and provider programs collected by the state since 1995 is over \$3 billion dollars.



Francis DuBois celebrates a victory at the Special Olympics Winter Games.



The DMR would like to thank our Partners in servicing over 19,000 consumers statewide



Ability Beyond Disability
 Ability In Motion (AIM)
 ABLE Supported Living, Inc.
 ACES
 ACORD, Inc.
 Action Behavioral Consulting
 Adult Day Care Inc. DBA The Day Club
 Adult Vocational Programs, Inc.
 Agency on Aging/South Central CT
 Alliance Staffing of CT. LLC
 Allied Community Resources
 Allied Rehab Centers, Inc.
 Almost Home Adult Daycare, LLC
 Alternative Enrichment at Bel-Spa
 Alternative Services, Inc
 Alternatives, Inc.
 American School for the Deaf
 ARC OF Farmington Valley, Inc.
 ARC of Meriden-Wallingford, Inc.
 ARC of New Haven
 ARC of New London County
 ARC of Quinebaug Valley Inc.
 ARC of Southington, Inc.
 ARI of Ct.
 Around the Clock Nursing Services LLC
 Baroco Corp
 Benhaven
 Brian House
 Bridges A Comm. Support Service
 Bristol ARC
 Buckingham Community Services
 C.I.B.(The Connecticut Institute for the Blind)
 Camp Horizons Inc.
 Camp Horizons Program, Inc.
 Capital Region Education Council (CREC)
 CareFocus, Inc.
 Caring Community of CT.
 Catholic Family Services
 CCARC
 ChapelHaven
 Cheshire Occupational & Career Opportunities, Inc.
 Chez Nous
 CLASP Homes, Inc.
 Comfort Keepers
 Community Enterprises, Inc.
 Community Options of CT
 Community Residences Inc.
 Community Social Integration
 Community Systems
 Community Vocational Services (CVS)
 Connecticut PDD, LLC
 Connection, The
 Continuum Home Health Care
 Continuum of Care Inc.
 Corporation for Public Management

CW Resources, Inc.
 Directions, Inc.
 Easter Seals Ct Inc.
 Easter Seals CT Inc./ Camp Hemlocks
 Easter Seals Goodwill Industries
 Easter Seals Greater Hfd.
 Rehabilitation Center, Inc.
 Easter Seals of Waterbury
 Eastern Community Development Corp.
 Education Connection
 Educational Consultants
 Employment Options
 Fairfield County Assistance Corp
 Family Care Visiting Nurse and Home Care Agency
 Family Options
 Family Partnerships of CT
 Farmington Valley Adult Day Care Center
 Friends of New Milford
 Global Horizon Home Care
 Goodwill Industries of Springfield/Hartford
 Goodwill Industries of Western CT
 Green Chimneys
 Greenwich ARC
 Grounded in Love
 Guide Inc.
 H&W Vocational and Respite Services L.L.C.
 HARC
 HART
 Health Ways
 Heartbeet Lifesharing
 Hillside Acres Inc.
 Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury, Inc.
 Hockanum Ind.
 Home Care Resources, LLC
 Humanidad Industries
 I.P.P.
 ICES, Inc.
 Inclusion First, LLC
 Jewish Association for Community Living (JCL)
 Kaleidoscope Family Solutions
 Kennedy Center
 Key Service System, Inc.
 Kuhn Employment Opportunities, Inc.
 LARC
 Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center, Inc.
 Manhattan Hall
 MARC inc. of Manchester
 MARC: Community Resources
 March of Manchester
 Marrakech Housing Options
 May Institute
 Mental Health Association of CT, Inc.
 MORE Services, Inc.
 Mosaic
 NERS Inc.
 Network, Inc.

New Canaan Group Home
 New England Ctr for Children
 New Seasons, Inc.
 North American Family Institute CT. Inc. (N.A.F.I.CT)
 Northeast Placement Services, Inc.
 Northwest Community Living Assistance, LLC
 Oleans Center
 Opportunity House
 Options Employment and Educational Services, LLC
 Options Unlimited Inc.
 Prime Care Inc.
 Project Genesis Inc.
 Public Partnerships, LLC
 Reliance House, Inc.
 REM CT
 Resources for Human Development
 RMS Development Inc.Robins Nest Intergraded Daycare LLC
 SARAH
 SARAH Seneca Residential Services
 SARAH Tuxis
 Seabird Enterprises
 Seacorp, Inc
 Senior Care Center of CT
 Sharp Training
 Southeastern Employment Services, LLC
 Sphere
 St. Francis Hospital/ Lifeline
 St. Vincent's Special Needs Services
 STAR Inc.
 Sunrise Northeast
 Sunset Hills, Inc
 Sunset Shores of Milford
 Terrace Hall-Guardian Angels
 Thames Valley Council for Community Action
 Transitional Employment Unlimited
 Tri-County ARC
 Turning Leaf Agency
 UCP of Eastern CT
 UCP of Greater Hartford
 United Cerebral Palsy Association of Southern CT, Inc.
 United Community & Family Services
 Vantage
 VARCA
 Vin Fen Corp. CT
 Vista Vocational Life Skills Center
 VRI
 Waterbury ARC
 West Haven Community House
 Whole Life
 WILA
 Winsted Group Home
 Winsted Senior Center

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